



SILK WAY 2021 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



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2021 Silk Way Rally: winners are announced

The Silk Way Rally ended on Tuesday. Started in the historical center of Omsk on Sobornaya Square on July 1, the competitors of the multi-day event overcame more than three and a half thousand kilometers across the territory of Russia and finished in the Republic of Altai – in Gorno-Altaysk. On July 6 during the Podium Ceremony the winners and prize-winners received their awards.

Force Majeure

The eleventh edition of the Silk Way Rally became the first rally-marathon after a two-year break. But in the course of the race completely unforeseen factors intervened in the perfectly made plan. After the start in Omsk, the event competitors went to Novosibirsk, and then to Gorno-Altaysk – the last bivouac in Russia was supposed to be located here. But in parallel with the course of the struggle on the track, the organizers of the Silk Way Rally promptly resolved the emerged force majeure situation.

The Rally Directorate received a letter from Denis Protsenko, Head of the Headquarters for the maintenance and control of the COVID-19 Mitigation Plan in which he demanded to change the route of the competition as soon as possible and consider the possibility of holding the event only on the territory of the Russian Federation within the regions of the originally approved route. For the race organizers the safety issues of its competitors, members of the organizing team, as well as spectators, are of primary importance. Therefore the Directorate decided not to cross the Russia-Mongolia border, but to use special stages on the territory of the Russian Federation to continue the rally.

The organizers managed to gracefully avoid stopping or canceling the Silk Way Rally. New legs of the event allowed the racers to continue the fight – the struggle turned out to be extremely interesting in all categories. But the most important thing is that the riders and drivers received points both in the standings of the round of the FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship and in the standings of the round of the FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Rallies.

Vladimir Chagin, Head of the Project, "I am glad that this edition of the Silk Way Rally attracted a lot of attention from the competitors and spectators. The racers were able to demonstrate their skills in the challenging conditions of the Siberian off-road and mountainous regions of Altai. Unfortunately, the situation with a pandemic interfered with the race, and in force majeure conditions we canceled the Mongolian part of the route. In the shortest possible time, the Rally Directorate was able to solve a difficult task and continue the competition across the territory of our country. I am sure that all competitors will take the warmest impressions of the beauty of our nature and uncompromising sports fight on the Silk Way routes with them."





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KTM is unbeatable

As in 2019, almost all the leaders of the FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship came to the Silk Way Rally. The battle for the one-and-a-half coefficient in the standings of the series, the round of which is the competition in Russia, unfolded between the riders of the leading factory teams.

Argentinian Franco Caimi (Hero Motosports Team Rally) set a high pace, becoming the best at the first leg. The World Championship leader and Silk Way Rally debut Ross Branch (Monster Yamaha Rally Official Team) took the lead in the general classification the very next day, but the marathon leg stopped a rider from Botswana: an engine breakdown led to a retirement.

Matthias Walkner of Red Bull KTM Factory Racing took advantage of a competitor's failure. The Austrian, for whom this Silk Way Rally was the first, only had to win the marathon leg to rise to the first line and confidently win the competition. The team from Austria showed a 100% result – two titles in two editions of the event.

Australian Daniel Sanders (Gasgas Factory Racing) excelled at three stages out of five, but in the overall standings he stopped just one step away from the first place. Caimi rounded out the top three, he attacked the American Skyler Howes (Rockstar Energy Husqvarna Factory Racing) on the last day, but lost only six seconds in 650 competitive kilometers.

But the debutants of the Silk Way Rally Oleg Pavlenko from Magnitogorsk and the Belarusian Anastasia Lianiova did not care about the time. The only woman in the motorcycle category declared at the finish line that she got great pleasure from the performance and is ready to celebrate her birthday at the race again.

The Portuguese Joaquim Rodrigues received a special prize from the general partner Gazprom PJSC at the awards ceremony in Gorno-Altaysk. The award "For the Will to Win" was given to the participant who showed the maximum courage, perseverance and dedication in achieving the main goal of the entire Silk Way Rally – the finish of this most difficult marathon! Rodrigues managed to continue to ride to the finish line in Gorno-Altaysk after his motorcycle was flooded with water while crossing the river. He had to disassemble the engine, pour out the water and reassemble it. After that he managed to enter the top ten according to the event results.

Maksimov did his best

It seemed that it was impossible to repeat the unique achievement of the Qatari Nasser Al-Attiyah of 2019 (the bronze medalist of the London Olympic Games in a skeet shooting won all the special stages of the rally in a car). But Alexander Maksimov managed to do it this summer. In a beautiful fight with the Pole Rafal Sonik, the racer convincingly won his prize.





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Invasion from Russia

The Russian racer Sergei Kariakin has built a completely new ATV for the Silk Way Rally, changing the Open category (victory in 2019) to T4 (serial SSVs modified for cross-country rallies). The driver from Ekaterinburg managed to enter the right category only on the second day of scrutineering, when all the shortcomings were corrected. Both the audience and the crew were the winners: competent and mistake-free driving helped Kariakin to win his second Silk Way Rally. And bright comments at the finish of the special stages have long become the hallmark of the driver.

T3 category also generated high audience interest. A large number of riders from Russia (both men and women) initially gave hope for their fight for the podium. And two crews managed to do it. Pavel Lebedev was the second in the final protocol, Pavel Silnov in a similar car climbed to the third step of the podium. The Frenchman Jean-Luc Pisson-Ceccaldi won the event.

Anastasia Nifontova (co-driver Ekaterina Zhadanova) was the best among all female crews, ahead of another Russian crew led by Maria Oparina (co-driver Lyudmila Petenko). Tatyana Sycheva with co-driver Alexander Alekseev also reached the finish line.

Vasilyev's retirement

In 2021 the Silk Way Rally attracted a large number of racers for whom this adventure was the first in their sports career. There was a dramatic struggle in the Car category. In the absence of Nasser Al-Attiyah, the winner of the 2019 race, several crews including two from Russia were the favorites. Both Denis Krotov and Vladimir Vasilyev joined the battle for the White Tiger from the first meters of the distance. They also won the first three special stages.

Vasilyev, the current winner of the FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Bajas, has the right to lament his fate: after the third leg he was ahead of the famous Frenchman Guerlain Chicherit by 23 seconds, but the wheels punctured by sharp stones became a stumbling block – there were no more spares for the second part of the marathon in their car. It was so offensive retirement. And Chicherit took the lead before the last day of the rally. Getting the job done was a matter of technique. Denis Krotov secured the second position, and another Frenchman Jerome Pelichet was the third, like two years ago. The Russian crew of Alexei Ignatov from the GAZ Raid Sport team followed the venerable racers in the table.

Sotnikov's unique achievement

Dmitry Sotnikov, the driver of the Russian KAMAZ-master Team started the rally in a completely new truck with a K5 type cab. The car was prepared in Naberezhnye Chelny literally the last day before leaving for Omsk for the event start. Crew number 501 left no chance for their competitors in the Truck classification (Open T5): three victories at legs





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and first place in the general classification. Sotnikov's result became unique: the 36-year-old driver became the only three-time winner in the Silk Way Rally history.

There was a keen struggle for the podium between several crews of the KAMAZ-master Team and the Belarusian MAZ-SPORTAUTO team. At the finish of the special stages sports trucks were separated seconds and minutes, and rearrangements in the top three took place on a daily basis – five crews alternately visited the virtual podium. On the fourth day of the rally Siarhei Viazovich in MAZ broke into the second line and secured it at the final leg. This result is the highest achievement of the Belarusian team at the Silk Way Rally. Anton Shibalov, another representative of the "Blue Armada" rounded out the top three.

The Silk Way Rally marathon is also a demonstration of advanced technologies. Sergey Kupriyanov, driving a unique gas-engine sports truck KAMAZ that is a joint project of the KAMAZ-master Team and Gazprom PJSC, was among the ten strongest racers, taking the seventh place in the overall standings.

The partners of the Silk Way Rally gave invaluable support to the race.

The general partner of the Silk Way Rally is the Gazprom PJSC. It is a global energy company that sees its mission in the reliable, efficient and balanced supply of natural gas, other types of energy resources and their processing products to consumers.

The official partners of the Silk Way Rally are the Gazpromneft filling station chain that fills the rally vehicles with reliable OPTI fuel, as well as the Soglasie insurance company, which has been operating in the insurance market for 27 years.

Overall / T1

- **1** – № 202 / CENTURY CR6
Guerlain CHICHERIT/ Alexandre WINOCQ
- **2** – № 203 / MINI JOHN COOPER WORKS RALLY
Denis KROTOV/ Konstantin ZHILTSOV
- **3** – № 205 / MD OPTIMUS
Jérôme PELICHET/ Pascal LARROQUE

Group T3

- **1** – № 225 / PH SPORT ZEPHYR
Jean-Luc PISSON-CECCALDI/ Jean BRUCY
- **2** – № 223 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK X3 XRS
Pavel LEBEDEV/ Kirill SHUBIN
- **3** – № 232 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK X3
Pavel SILNOV / Kirill SHUBIN





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Group T4

- **1** – № 404 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK
Sergei KARIAKIN/ Anton VLASIU
- **2** – № 223 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK X3 XRS
Matthieu MARGAILLAN/Axelle ROUX DECIMA

Group T5

- № 515 / DAF AE76NCA240
Pascal DE BAAR /Jan VAN DER VAET/ Loris BLOT

Moto

- **1** – № 52 / KTM 450 Rally – Matthias WALKNER
- **2** – № 29 / Husqvarna Rally 450 – Skyler HOWES
- **3** – № 2 / HERO RALLY 450 BETA – Franco CAIMI

Quad

- **1** – № 102 / YAMAHA YFM700R RAPTOR SE – Aleksandr MAKSIMOV
- **2** – № 101 / YAMAHA RAPTOR 700 – Rafal SONIK

Open T1

- № 521 / TOYOTA LAND CRUISER
Magdalena ZAJAC/ Jacek CZACHOR

Open T2

- № 522 / TOYOTA LAND CRUISER
Sergei SHALYGIN/Artem KANIVETC

Open T4

- **1** – № 408 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK X3 XRS
Erdenesuren GANBAATAR/Ariunbold SEROCHIR
- **2** – № 523 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK X3 XRS
Byambatsogt UDIIKHUU/ Byambadelger UDIIKHUU
- **3** – № 409 / BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK X3 XRS
Orgil ENKHBAT/ Telmen BUYANTSOGT





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Open T5

- **1** – № 501 / Kamaz 435091
Dmitry SOTNIKOV/ Ruslan AKHMADEEV/ Ilgiz AKHMETZIANOV
- **2** – № 502 / MAZ 6440RR
Siarhei VIAZOVICH / Pavel HARANIN/ Anton ZAPAROSHCHANKA
- **3** – № 303 / Kamaz 43509
Anton SHIBALOV / Dmitrii NIKITIN /Ivan TATARINOV

